

Message Text

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PAGE 01 MADRID 06671 082135Z
ACTION EUR-12

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USNMR SHAPE
SECSTATE WASHDC 0000
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UNCLAS MADRID 6671

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USIA FOR IOP/F

E.O. 11652: N/A
SUBJ: MADRID PRESS COMMENTARY PANAMA CANAL

1. EDITORIAL SEPTEMBER 8 EL PAIS (INDEPENDENT LIBERAL LEFT): "THE PRESIDENT OF PANAMA, GENERAL TORRIJOS, COMMITS HIMSELF WITH PRESIDENT CARTER, FOR ECONOMIC COMPENSATIONS, TO FREEZE THE DISPUTE BETWEEN NORTH-AMERICA AND PANAMA UNTIL THE YEAR 2000, REASONABLY, PRESIDENT CARTER THINKS THAT FOR THE TIME BEING HE HAS WON TWENTY THREE YEARS: LATER, WE'LL SEE...

2. "PRESIDENT CARTER BEGAN HIS MANDATE WITH, AMONG OTHER THINGS, A DOUBLE AFFIRMATION: THAT THE CONDITION OF THE U.S. AS THE MAJOR WORLD POWER DOES NOT JUSTIFY COLONIALIST BEHAVIOUR, NOR CAN IT LET ITS INTERESTS SUBORDINATE THE DEFENSE OF HUMAN RIGHTS. TODAY THE PRESIDENT RECEIVES THE DICTATORS OF THE CONTINENT IN
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THE WHITE HOUSE AND IMPOSES A ONE-SIDED AGREEMENT UPON THE MINI-REPUBLIC OF THE CANAL, THAT CONTINUES WITH ITS POPULAR SOVEREIGNTY AMPUTATED...

3. "MORE THAN HALF OF THE POPULATION OF THE U.S., ACCORDING TO POLLS, IS AGAINST THE RATIFICATION OF THE AGREEMENT...BUT WHAT THE POLLS DO NOT SAY IS THAT THE

PANAMANIAN PEOPLE HAVE MASSIVELY CROSSED ON MORE THAN ONE OCCASION THE BARBED WIRES, FOR THE RECOVERY OF THEIR VIOLATED RIGHTS.

4. "THAT CARTER SHOULD RECEIVE VIDELA AND PINOCHET IN THE WHITE HOUSE TO MAKE SURE OF ACCESS TO A WATERWAY LACKS JUSTIFICATION...MEANWHILE IN ARGENTINA 12 THOUSAND CITIZENS HAVE DISAPPEARED AND IN CHILE THE MOST SOPHISTICATED CHEMICAL AND ELECTRIC TORTURES ARE TESTED. THE DEFENSE OF HUMAN RIGHTS ANNOUNCED BY CARTER BECOMES MORE EACH DAY ONLY A PROMISE."

5. FOREIGN AFFAIRS EDITOR ANTONIO ALFEREZ WRITES IN SEPTEMBER 8 ABC (CONSERVATIVE): "PRESIDENT CARTER, WHO SUPPORTS A POLICY OF RESPECT FOR THE RIGHTS OF MAN, COULD DO NO LESS THAN RESPECT THE RIGHTS OF PEOPLES, IN THIS CASE THE PANAMANIAN. THE TREATY, WHICH ELIMINATES A HUMILIATING RELIC OF A COLONICAL PAST, IS A COMPROMISE THAT REPRESENTS NEITHER A TRIUMPH NOR A DEFEAT FOR EITHER OF THE SIGNERS." ITEM. RYLANCE

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